Dear Dave, 12/31/87

Your letter of 12/29 marked #2 (#1 has not come) came at the right time: I wasn't able to do much besides sit so I sat and thought. I'd done what turned out to be too much tending the fire. That this does happen is the major reason I've done no writing, much as I want to. I can't do much and I just stay very tired.

What was too much is very little, just standing a bit more than usual a bit more often while trying to get some green wood to take fire. I can never tell what will be too much with these simple things, for others simple. And if I get into what I'm writing and forget to get up and walk around a bit, that, too, knocks me out. This is much more so since the prostate operation.

Phil Melanson never told me he was working on a book. He did say he was doing some research and I recall he did, quite some time ago, consult me about the Ray aliases, if I remember correctly, Galt in particular. He was building some kind of case against the real Galt.

However, he has a perfect right to do a book and not less a right to keep that secret from me. And I think you had little choice, that you did the right thing.

If he's spoken to Jerry, Jerry hasn't mentioned it. His line was busy when I phoned. Got him - not told about book, not consulted as you asked but did some time ago have a question or two about "the McCullough file," meaning those parts of the sanitation workers/Invaders files. (He has all but four exams graded and has his marks to get in by Monday and Barb is down with a herpes infection, so New Years Eve's dinner out is off.)

I think the suggestions you gave Phil are good and should improve the book.

I always have a question about Praeger, though, because he was a CIA publisher. That doesn't mean he would not do a book today because the CIA would not like it but perhaps he might be more interested in a book the CIA would like. As because of its errors regarding the CIA. Praeger's then director of special projects whose name I recall as Mort Puner went big for my first book and Praeger turned it down despite that recommendation without reading it. Later read the ms. overnight. Sent to him by a mutual friend.

I've discussed this with Jerry but won't to anyone else. Lil's explanation of his desire for secrecy is self, so many writers and academics are that way.

I'm glad he didn't ask for my help because I'd probably have given it. That might have taxed me some.

Although Garrow seems to be a reasonable suspect for the adverse comments he is anything but an expert on the assassination. He knows nothing at all about it. He doesn't have a word on it in Bearing the Cross, which is think is an excellent job.

What I spent the time thinking about is none of the above. It is your comment that amounts to somehow I should do the book. I thought about it enough to have two pages of the first chapter typed. New first chapter, one that can make integration of the mostly completed draft of 1974-5 possible.

This means I'll have to do it off the top of the head and hope to fill in and flesh out because I'm not up to much searching. And there are two other things I must do first. One is filing pro se against the local urologist and hospital, and time for that is close, with many problems, and the other is filing for an en banc review in the field offices cases. After sitting on it for a year the appeals court held against me without even reading the briefs, on an out-of-order and completely wrong DJ motion for summary affirmance.

We are about as we were except that I've had a rougher time beginning about a month ago. Do not know the cause and Dr. Hufnagel didn't a week ago. In some ways, though,

things are good. We cashed in a CD and got a new furnace and a new car, the latter a dream and a steal. I have a 1987 Plymouth Reliant K LE, which is the top of that line, for about $4,000 less than list, with the 7-year,70,000 miles guarantee, used by Chrysler. Car cost $7175 plus state taxes and $100 for the book work necessary in all the guarantee transfers. Gave old faithful, just beginning its 24th year, to a local high school with an auto shop. The new car has all the things I felt we could not afford and some I'd never dreamed of. Auto shift, air conditioning, power steering and brakes, fuel injection, fantastic stereo with four speakers, excellent heater (no more winter-time hotwater bottles!), upholstery instead of plastic, rugs even in the trunk, larger motor etcetcetc. Got gas yesterday, first time in two weeks. Now remember, I don't drive much, but in that time I went to the lab at least three times, went to the mall daily, took Lil shopping several times, went out to eat twice that I recall, drove a little in the neighborhood, and I used $4.62 in gas. Cold mornings now I start the car at home, return to it in 5 minutes and have some heat. I go to the mailbox and park with the heat and radio on and go over the morning papers until it is light enough for headlight glare not to make problems with my cataracts. Don't disturb Lil, have excellent music and get started on the papers that I've generally finished with by the time I'm home. The furnace is insurance. The old one was working fine but was quite old. Paid for both from one $10,000 CD and had a few bucks left. Another oldster I see daily where so many of us get our exercise introduced me to this nearby dealer, an old friend of his. The dealer brought it up to show me himself, after pretty much of a verbal agreement by phone, and after we agreed to buy it he told me he knew all about me and if it needs repairs or service, he'll come and pick it up and return it. It has a leak over the drivers door and he was as good as his word. That the car had been driven was a break for me because I'm not able to break a car in properly now. It also is quieter than any of the cars I looked at. We are pleased that we got a good buy on just transportation and more than pleased with the luxuries thrown in at a much lower price than the smallest and cheapest cars we looked at. It is a four-door and we have no trouble with the width of the front doors and find the separate back doors convenient with groceries, etc.

We had two Christmases, the very enjoyable Christmas Eve one with the McKnights and a Christmas day one with a friend you've never met, a former professor whose father, of all coincidences, taught my older sister in high school.

Hope all of you had a good holiday and have a good year ahead.

Best,

Hal